United Nations CRC/C/OPAC/GIN/Q/1/Add.1

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Distr.: General
3 July 2017
English
Original: French
English, French and Spanish only

Committee on the Rights of the Child
Seventy-sixth session
11-29 September 2017
Item 4 of the provisional agenda
Consideration of reports of States parties

List of issues in relation to the report submitted by Guinea under article 8 (1) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict

Addendum

Replies of Guinea to the list of issues*

[Date received: 15 June 2017]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

GE.17-11050 (F) 200717 080817

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1. In relation to paragraphs 19 and 23 of the State party's report (CRC/C/OPAC/GIN/1 and Corr.1), please describe the status and the mandate of the Guinean Committee on the Protection of Children's Rights and the relationship between that Committee and the Guinean armed forces' unit for the advancement and protection of children.

1. The Guinean Committee on the Protection of Children's Rights is an advisory body that operates under the authority of the Ministry of Social Action, the Advancement of Women and Children's Affairs. It is responsible for overseeing the action taken at the national level to comply with the decisions and recommendations made by the bodies that monitor the implementation of international treaties and conventions on child rights.

2. It develops national mechanisms and strategies to enhance child rights monitoring and the child protection system. To that end, it is responsible for:

- Monitoring the overall implementation of children's rights, in accordance with the national and international instruments adopted by Guinea.
- Coordinating and overseeing efforts to strengthen the protection system.
- Ensuring the effective implementation of treaty body recommendations.
- Drafting and submitting periodic reports to the various bodies that are responsible for monitoring child rights.

3. The armed forces and the Guinean Committee on the Protection of Children's Rights worked together closely during the setting up of the armed forces' unit for the advancement and protection of children and its branches in the four military regions, and have also collaborated on initiatives to promote and protect child rights. For example, representatives of the Committee helped to run military training sessions on children's rights and the protection of children before, during and after armed conflicts, with financial support from the NGOs Save the Children Sweden and Sabou-Guinée. In addition, child victims of trafficking who were intercepted at Guinean land borders by soldiers working for this unit in Guinea have been referred to the Committee and to the National Directorate of Children's Affairs for rehabilitation with support from national partner NGOs. Lastly, this unit is one of the national bodies consulted during the drafting of State reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

2. With respect to paragraph 128 of the State party's report, please specify the measures taken over the past three years to disseminate information on the Optional Protocol to the police force's Office for the Protection of Gender, Children and Morals, the police in general, the armed forces, children and the general public.

4. As part of the child protection component of Guinea's programme of cooperation with the United N::tions Children's Fund (UNICEF), information on legal instruments is disseminated to the defence and security forces, children, civil society organizations and the general public. In 2014, 2015 and 2016, regional workshops on relevant legal instruments were held with 90 persons working in the field of child protection, in the administrative regions of Kankan, Kindia and the special zone of Conakry. During ordinary sessions of the Children's Parliament held in September 2015 and December 2016, the 114 junior deputies and 38 supervisors received training on the provisions of the Convention and its Optional Protocols, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the International Labour Organization (ILO) Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). Furthermore, the Month of the Child, which is celebrated in June each year, is devoted to social action, advocacy and awareness-raising on child-related issues, involving communities throughout the country.

5. In 2016, the theme proposed by the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child for the Day of the African Child (16 June 2016) was "Conflict and Crisis in Africa: Protecting all Children's Rights". In that context, throughout June, some 6,000 children, community leaders, family members, defence and security force members, and political and administrative decision makers benefited from awareness-raising on the harmful effects of children's rights violations during conflicts and the importance of building a culture of tolerance and promoting social harmony.

3. **In relation to paragraphs 22, 56, 63, 66, 113, 127 and 128 of the State party's report, please provide information on the number of individuals who have received training on the Optional Protocol geared to professionals working with or for the benefit of children, among others; to members of the police and armed forces; and to private security firms.**

6. Over the period 2016-2017, 950 members of the police force, the gendarmerie and the armed forces received training relating to the Convention and its Optional Protocol, including training on international humanitarian law.

Please also provide information on the prevention policies and strategies on which such training is based.

7. This training is based on the National Policy on the Promotion and Protection of Children's Rights and Well-being and the related three-year budgeted implementation plan.

8. Within this National Policy, the second action point, on strengthening and implementing the political, legal and institutional framework, places emphasis on the need to disseminate and render accessible national and international legal instruments on child protection to all professionals and other persons involved in child protection and to the general public.

9. Moreover, a key activity linked to effect 2, outcome 2.4, of the Policy's three-year implementation plan is the provision of training for persons working in territorial administration, education, health, justice, security, youth affairs, communication and religious affairs, on child protection tools, norms and standards and case management procedures.

4. **Please provide detailed information on the measures taken to prevent children under the age of 18 from joining the armed forces or armed groups, given that many children, in particular those in rural areas, do not have a birth certificate.**

10. Measures taken to prevent children from joining the armed forces or armed groups include the following: dissemination of the content of the Optional Protocol to members of the armed forces, including senior military officials, through various training and information sessions over the past few years; the adoption of a Code of Military Justice in 2012 and the establishment of a military justice system responsible for enforcing that Code; awareness-raising among members of the public, especially parents, on their responsibilities under the Optional Protocol; capacity-building for civil society on monitoring the implementation of the Convention and its first two Optional Protocols; measures to improve the birth registration process, including regular campaigns to raise public awareness and the provision of birth certificates free of charge during a certain period; and ongoing peacebuilding efforts by the Government.

5. **Please provide information on the measures taken to supervise military education under the programme for the enrolment of Guinean students in the military schools of neighbouring countries and to monitor whether such children are taught to use firearms.**

11. The curriculum that is taught by these schools is entirely consistent with the national curriculum of the countries in question.

Please also provide information on children's opportunities to leave these schools voluntarily.

12. These children are not required to enter the military once they have obtained the *baccalauréat* (certificate of secondary education); nevertheless, the purpose of these schools is to turn children into good officers who will then join the army.

6. Please specify how the child protection system referred to in paragraph 65 of the State party's report helps to identify children who are vulnerable to practices contrary to the Optional Protocol by reason of their economic and social status, in particular children who are refugees or asylum seekers.

13. The identification mechanism of the child protection system covers all categories of children, including children who are refugees and asylum seekers, as the case may be.

7. Please provide information on the consequences suffered by those responsible for the recruitment of 9,000 young volunteers in 2001, at least 1,600 young people in 2009 and children in refugee camps in the Guinée-Forestière region between 2000 and 2002, referred to in paragraphs 26, 27 and 29, respectively, of the State party's report.

14. A criminal investigation into the recruitment of children in Kaléya in 2009 has not yet been launched. However, these children have been demobilized and their socioprofessional reintegration is progressing smoothly. Between 2000 and 2002, children in refugee camps in the Guinée-Forestière region and Guinean children from some communities in that region were kidnapped and forcibly recruited by armed groups from Liberia and Sierra Leone. Those children were used in conflicts that had broken out in those countries. Some of the Guinean victims were demobilized in Liberia and repatriated to Guinea with the help of the International Committee of the Red Cross, for reintegration with support from the NGO Sabou-Guinée, UNICEF and the Guinean Government.

8. In relation to paragraphs 107 and 108 of the State party's report, please provide information on acts covered by the Optional Protocol that have been committed by Guinean military personnel outside Guinean territory and in respect of which article 18 of the 2012 Code of Military Justice has been invoked.

15. No information is currently available.

9. Please provide information on the rehabilitation, demobilization and social and occupational reintegration policies referred to in paragraphs 26, 27, 112 and 114 of the State party's report.

16. The policies on the rehabilitation, demobilization and socioprofessional reintegration of children who have been involved in the armed forces or armed groups are based on the National Policy on the Promotion and Protection of Children's Rights and Well-being. The aim of that policy is to provide protection for all child victims of abuse, violence, exploitation or neglect, with technical and financial support from development partners, in accordance with article 39 of the Convention.